

In 1800, Dr. Solomon Jones, a pioneer doctor in Upper Canada and recently appointed Judge of the Johnstown District, built an impressive stone house overlooking the St. Lawrence River. Homewood was to shelter seven generations of the Jones family, over 172 years.

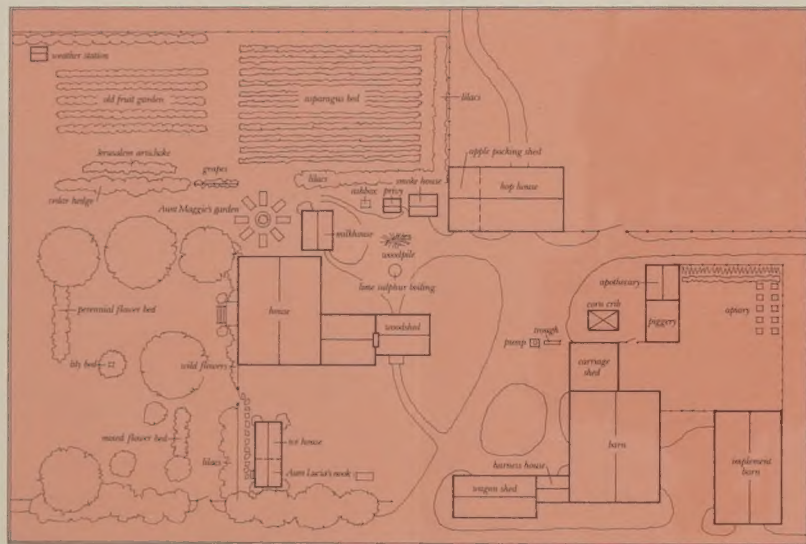
A fine example of Georgian domestic architecture, Homewood has been restored as a historic site by the Ontario Heritage Foundation. By showing the changing fortunes of the Jones family farm, it opens a window through time to Ontario's origins and to the resourcefulness and courage that have created our present prosperity.

The accumulated contents of house and attic include letters, medical records, furniture and clothing dating back to the 1780s. Family papers, now housed in various depositories including the Queen's University Archives, provide an unusually complete family picture.

Each of the main-floor rooms has been restored with the use of original furnishings to show the changing tastes of the five masters of Homewood. The front hall is furnished in the style of the early 19th century, the period of Dr. Solomon Jones. This era is further amplified in the "surgery" with displays and a medical vignette. The rear bedroom represents the style of the mid-century; the front sitting room the settled domesticity of the 1890s. The original kitchen has been restored as Harold Jones' office in the second decade of this century and the back kitchen, with its apple "clutter" and paraphernalia, represents Homewood in the 1940s.

Throughout the house, display panels offer glimpses of the Jones story at Homewood, from pioneer settlement to 20th-century farm.

When the restoration of Homewood is complete, visitors will be able to walk through gardens and orchards and view a 19th-century orchard along with its modern counterpart.



The Homewood farm layout at the turn of the century.



The Ontario Heritage Foundation was established in 1968 to encourage the conservation of Ontario's cultural heritage. Its resources, derived from public funds and private donations, are used to hold, preserve and restore heritage property, and to aid those engaged in that process. The Foundation is a Crown agency reporting through the Ministry of Citizenship and Culture.

The Society, first organized in 1891, is one of the older historical societies in Ontario. The present organization, re-established in 1960 and incorporated in 1974, is committed to the preservation and dissemination of Grenville County history and continuing community involvement.

The Homewood Museum is managed and operated by the Society, which maintains an Archival Resource Centre on the second floor. The Society has an active publications program, presents history awards, arranges for historical plaques, holds regular monthly meetings and provides research services to the public.

Hon. Bruce McCaffrey, Minister
James Ramsay, Deputy Minister
John White, Chairman OHF

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"... Louis Brilliére, Master Mason ... promises to construct a two-storey house on the lot where the said Mr. Solomon Jones resides of 48 feet in length from the outside to the outside, by 38 feet wide from the outside to the outside."

"... the said Mr. Jones to furnish all the stone, lime, sand and prepared mortar, scaffolding, necessary labour and all the lumber . . . as well as feeding all the workmen and the said contractor for the whole time of the said work."

Contract for the building of
Homewood, March 6, 1800.



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Citizenship
and Culture



Homewood in approx. 1900. The porch illustrated is likely the first built for the house.

DR. SOLOMON JONES

The Jones family, originally from Connecticut, settled near Fort Edward, New York, on the Hudson River south of Lake George. In 1776, the American Revolution interrupted Solomon's medical studies; at the age of 20, he enlisted in Jessup's Corps of Loyalists as a surgeon's mate. In the following year, after the surrender of the British forces under General Burgoyne at Saratoga, Solomon completed his studies in Montreal.

After the Revolution, as a reward for loyalty to the British Crown, Solomon Jones was among many who received grants of land in Canada. In 1785, he was granted 200 acres, where Homewood now stands. Though fully occupied with a busy medical practice, Dr. Jones found time to take on public duties. An appointment to a District judgeship was followed by election to Upper Canada's Legislative Assembly. By 1800 with 100 acres cleared, and his prospects apparently secure, he hired a Montreal stonemason to build the largest stone house in the region for his growing family.

Solomon Jones died in 1822, esteemed for his charity and integrity. He left to his descendants 4,600 acres scattered through eight townships and an imposing residence, a focal point and home to succeeding generations of the Jones family.

MEDICINE IN 1800

Since Solomon's family saved much of his medical equipment, including his instruments and account books, we can trace his career accurately. As the only doctor between Gananoque and Cornwall, he was often called miles into the back country to treat stricken settlers (and occasionally their animals). Patients kept a nervous eye on Solomon's saddle-bags, where he carried his medical instruments with their fearsome saw edges for amputation and bloodletting. In the age of "heroic medicine", a surgeon could amputate a limb in 30 seconds with no anesthetic other than brandy and opium.

Most of his patients, however, visited him at home. His grandson Andrew noted in his 1904 reminiscences that Solomon's apothecary shop was still standing and in use as a pig pen! Solomon obtained most of his medical supplies from Montreal, but it is likely that some medicinal herbs were grown at Homewood.



A medicine box belonging to Dr. Solomon Jones.



Orchard inspection; Harold Jones in the early 20th century.

THE FAMILY FARM

Four masters governed Homewood in the 150 years following Solomon's death. Under Dunham, and later Andrew Jones, Homewood had become a fully-developed, diversified working farm by the turn of the century. In the 1880s, Harold Jones' interest in scientific agriculture prompted the development of an experimental fruit orchard at Homewood, later designated as the St. Lawrence Fruit Station of the Dominion Experimental Farm. In 1900, Harold developed a unique variety of Snow Apple which was marketed under the name Jones Red Fameuse, and briefly threatened to displace the McIntosh as Ontario's favorite apple. In 1924, his apples won a silver and a bronze medal at Bermington, England, in competition with entries from all over the British Empire.

The last master of Homewood was Justus Jones, a respected horticulturalist, who succeeded his father in 1941. After his death in 1972, the house was vacated by the last members of the family.



Apple blossom time at Homewood.



THE RESTORATION OF HOMEWOOD

Du Pont Canada bought the Jones farm in the 1950s to provide for expansion of its chemical plant. However, many individuals and groups expressed concern for preservation of the house, given its evident architectural qualities and its place in the early history of the province. As a result, with a fine sense of civic responsibility, Du Pont gave the house and 11 acres of land to the Ontario Heritage Foundation in 1974.

The "restoration" of most historic structures is concerned with recreating the original appearance. Subsequent alterations which conflict with the original design are usually viewed as unimportant and removed, with the result that much of the interesting later history of a building may be lost.

Homewood represents a different approach to restoration. Later alterations have been selectively preserved and the restored house shows how the Jones family adapted it to changing social conditions and technology. For example, the house as it stands incorporates each of three building stages: the main house of 1800, the kitchen wing of a decade or two later, and the large west addition of the early 1940s.



In the restoration of Homewood, workers were very careful to preserve as much original material as possible.

A family gathering on the front stoop of Homewood. The 1912 porch was removed during restoration.